

August 30, 2013

To: Executive Board

Subject: **Amendment to Pulsar Advertising Contract (No. 12-038)**

Recommendation

Approve an amendment to the Pulsar Advertising general marketing Contract (No. 12-038) in the amount of \$213,627, for:

- The development and implementation of a College Pass Marketing Program for both the 15-month Mt. SAC Class Pass pilot program and the University of La Verne Class Pass pilot program (\$115,990).
- The full redesign of foothilltransit.org to include mobile app creation, NextBus integration, new CMS backend, enhanced online research analytics, and Title VI compliant multi-lingual translation capability (\$97,637).

Analysis

Student ridership programs across the country account for 11 percent of public transportation users, helping local colleges reduce campus congestion and university parking costs while improving regional safety and air quality around commuter campuses. Reaching out to students increases their probability of ridership as they enter the workforce, generating transit-positive commuters of the future. These student focused-programs are marketing and ridership growth efforts and allow transit agencies the opportunity to collect valuable information while increasing ridership.

With the upcoming launches of college pass programs at Mt. San Antonio College and the University of La Verne, a comprehensive marketing plan was designed to provide a core marketing and promotion template that could be adapted to multiple campuses.

A large part of the marketing plan targets students via mobile devices. The marketing plan will include an inbound microsite -- a mini-digital online portal -- accessible through strategically placed on-campus QR codes. These codes, which are scannable by all smartphones -- would direct students to more deeply engage with Foothill Transit's digital communication tools, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter and our email notification system. In addition, traditional marketing tools, such as on-campus kiosk advertising, brochures, mailers, and other non-digital media will be employed to inform the campus of the program and attract new ridership.

The campaign is expected to continue for the full 15-month term of the pilot program, with heavy emphasis on the beginning of the Fall 2013, Spring 2014, and Fall 2014 semesters. The marketing tools developed for this pilot program would form the foundation of a wider college outreach program and be employed at other schools to

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encourage new ridership. The University of La Verne will be the second school launched as part of the Class Pass program in Fall 2013. Additional schools could also be added to the campaign.

Foothill Transit's website was originally launched in 2001 and underwent major redesigns in 2004 and 2009 to include new communications and graphics technologies and to reorganize the website's navigation to more closely align with user patterns. The industry standard for website redesign is approximately every two to four years. In addition, it is highly recommended that agencies redesign when rebranding initiatives are launched, when design trends have changed significantly, when content outgrows the current structure, and when pivotal new functionalities or technologies become available. Foothill Transit's website has reached all of these milestones in FY 2014 and was added to the agency's major initiatives in the FY 2014 Business Plan and Budget.

The scope for the FY 2014 Website Redesign includes the following components:

- Foothill Transit mobile apps (both IOS & Android)
- New blogging tool
- Detailed wireframe
- Improved Content Management System (CMS) integration
- Mobile friendly website
- Multilingual capabilities
- Revamped search engine optimization to ensure quality indexing among the major search engines
- Social marketing, news aggregator, and bookmarking site integration
- RSS feed integration for electronic alerts and social media
- Real-time arrival (NextBus) integration with trip planning tools
- Customer-centric navigation redesign (i.e. chat/web support, data collection to contact riders with preferred communication methods.
- Improved analytics reporting to gauge customer usage habits and employ inbound marketing technologies

Budget Impact

The conceptual work and design of the College Pass Marketing Program core template, and the launch of the Mt. SAC pilot program cost \$75,760. Each additional school brought into the program would cost \$40,230 to alter the logos and materials to fit the new campus. At this time we only anticipate bringing in one additional school – the University of La Verne -- to the program for FY 2014, bringing the total portion of this amendment cost to \$115,990. This cost includes digital strategy, concept creation and execution, including a program name and logo, copywriting and design of all program elements, and status tracking and data analysis from all digital tools to evaluate ROI and adjust for each semester to better connect with the student population. This pilot

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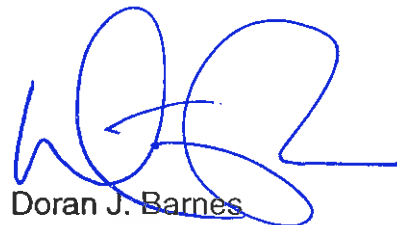
program is eligible for funding through Foothill Transit's allocation of Los Angeles County Measure R funds.

The complete redesign of foothilltransit.org will cost \$97,637 and includes major technology upgrades to both the external user interface – via language availability, apps, NextBus integration, and new customer communications tools – and internal backend upgrades that will eliminate obsolete content management software and install a more comprehensive customer and content management system that would streamline both content creation and customer communications.

Sincerely,



Felicia E. Friesema
Director of Marketing and Communications



Doran J. Barnes
Executive Director